

May 3, 2007

Greetings:

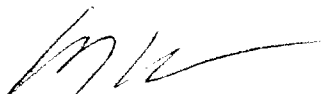
We are writing to share our personal testimony about the Second Parent Adoption bill currently being debated in the Michigan Senate. As Social Workers, we know first hand the challenges faced by children who do not have a stable, safe home. We have worked with children in foster care, and have seen the difference this consistency can make in the life of a child.

Therefore, we were honored to become foster parents and later adopt four children. When we received our foster care license and were called --the same day--about a sibling group of older children, we opened our hearts and homes to the children. That day, our family grew with the addition of three boys, aged eight, nine and ten (who were joined eighteen months later by their slightly younger sister) who had been physically and emotionally abused as well as neglected. Our road has been sometimes challenging as we raised the children, but it has been so rewarding to watch them grow and develop.

We have always shared parenting duties equally. However, when the time came to finally adopt the children only one of us was allowed to adopt. This was a difficult decision, and we worked together to analyze the best interests of the children as we calculated access to benefits like health care and university tuition credits. Having only one legal parent caused some difficulties, such as checking in children at medical appointments, signing up for school programs, taking children home from events and other legal rights taken for granted by most parents.

Fortunately, we were later able to do "Second Parent Adoption" and receive a birth certificate with both of our names on it. This has tremendously increased the security that our children have, and they know that if something tragic happens to one of us, they will still be protected both legally and financially. We continue to provide for their basic needs, and are delighted that now they are 17, 17, 18 and 18 years old, and they are making great progress in school, as athletes, musicians, and community members, and as active members of our religious congregation.

We are proud of our children, and grateful to the many people that have supported our whole family, and pleased that our state is finally coming close to providing this important legal protection to all children within the state. Please feel free to contact us for any further information.



Mary Boudreau, LMSW, LPN and Susan Grettenberger, LMSW, MPA, PhD
1220 S. Genesee

Lansing, MI 48915

517-372-4146

Boudreal@msu.edu

